

RITA

The third typhoon in August, Rita, made landfall in Japan closely following the wake of Typhoon Phyllis. Due to heavy rains brought by Rita, the storm proved to be the most damaging to affect the northern Japanese islands since 1965.

The typhoon's birth can be traced to the development of a monsoon depression some 180 nm southeast of Okinawa on the 18th. Drifting first east then westward, Rita began to gain strength as aircraft reconnaissance reports verified storm force winds in the circulation on the following day. Due to a weakening subtropical high cell east of Japan, heights began to fall north of Rita. In response, the storm reversed track to an easterly direction a few miles off the northern tip of Okinawa. A minimum pressure of 983.4 mb was registered at Kadena Air Base on the 20th at 0620Z although winds were comparatively light with a peak gust of 37 kt from the northwest recorded at 0514Z.

An approaching short wave over Manchuria began to draw Rita on a more northward course late on the 20th (Fig. 4-8). By the afternoon of the 21st, typhoon force winds were reached and Rita's circulation had grown significantly in size. Due to the building pressure gradient associated with the high cell east of Japan, gale force winds extended some 300 nm in the typhoon's eastern semicircle. As the short wave continued to approach the typhoon, Rita accelerated gradually in a north-northeasterly direction, making land-

fall 30 nm west of Osaka late on the 22nd (Fig. 4-9). Prior to landfall, Rita's 40-60 nm diameter eye passed over Murotomisaki (WMO station 47899, elev 606 ft), Shikoku. The station experienced a pressure reading of 966.3 mb at 1200Z and sustained surface winds of 80 kt.

Quickly crossing central Honshu, Rita veered slightly and accelerated to speeds of 30-35 kt ahead of an advancing cold front in the Sea of Japan. First tracking along the western coast, Rita crossed the northern portion of Honshu, finally emerging back into the Pacific on a northeasterly heading. Strong gusty winds occurred along the exposed southern coast of Honshu between the Kii and Boso peninsulas. Southerly winds gusting near 55 kt were recorded at Yokota Air Base between 0300Z and 0400Z on the 23rd.

Merging with the frontal zone south of Hokkaido, Rita continued to track north-eastward as an extratropical low. Torrential rains swept Hokkaido with amounts totaling near 8.2 inches in 24 hr. Landslides and flash flooding as a result of the rains were responsible for extensive crop and property damage with farmlands inundated and 36,000 houses flooded throughout Japan. At least 26 deaths were attributed to the typhoon. Newspaper reports indicate that it was the worst flooding in 10 years for Hokkaido. Several major rivers on the island overflowed their banks leaving towns marooned and isolated.

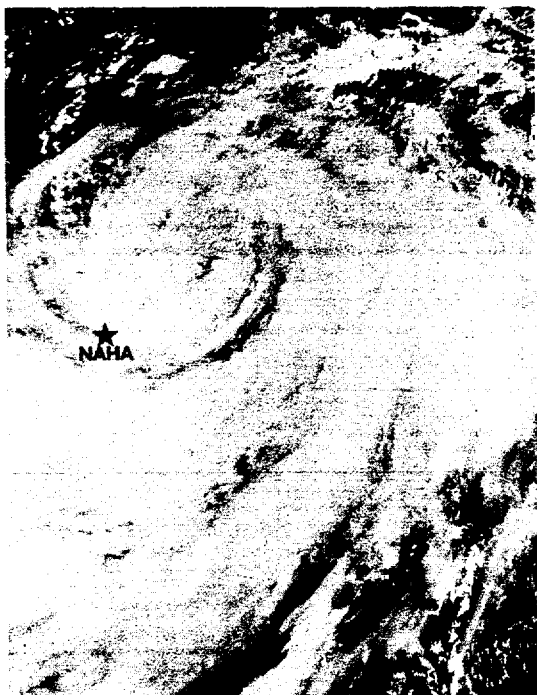


FIGURE 4-8. Rita as a 60 kt tropical storm 190 nm northeast of Okinawa, 20 August 1975, 2253Z. (DMSP imagery)

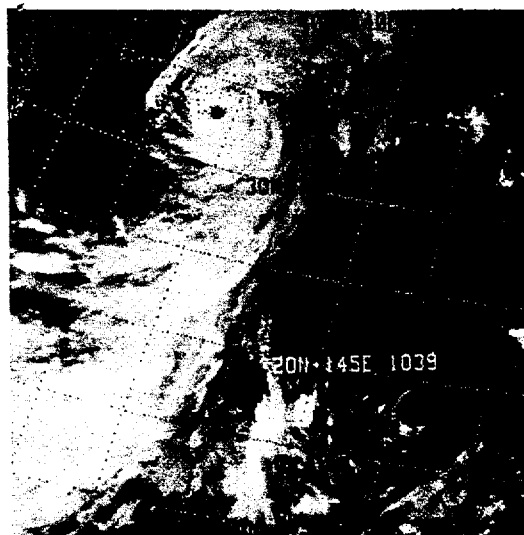


FIGURE 4-9. Infrared photograph of Typhoon Rita just prior to landfall in Japan, 22 August 1975, 1843Z. (NOAA-4 imagery)